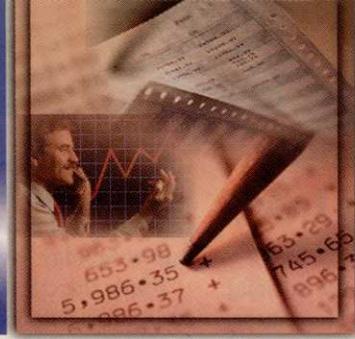


MANAGEMENT



BRIEFS

HERITAGE GETS \$44 MILLION IN REFINANCING

RED BANK, N.J. — GMAC Commercial Mortgage (GMACCM), recently provided \$44 million in interim refinancing for San Diego, Calif.-based Heritage Golf Group. The financing was for three unnamed golf courses, one in California and two in Georgia. The GMACCM Golf Finance Group based in Washington, D.C., arranged the transaction, which follows on the heels of GMACCM's foray into the golf industry by providing \$650 million in financing for the acquisition of National Golf Properties' 253 golf courses earlier this year (GCN, May 2003).

LEGENDS GROUP INSTALLS UPLINK SYSTEMS

AUSTIN, Texas — UpLink Corp. has installed its SmartCourse Profit Generating System at Legends Resorts Group's Moorland, Heathland and Parkland golf courses in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Larry Woodberry, golf operations director for the Legends Group, said UpLink's global positioning satellite-based management system will allow the courses to realize significant savings by not having to print yardage books. Through UpLink's relationship with on-car scoring and live leaderboard capabilities provider Vision Perfect, Legends will also be able to increase its tournament bookings, Woodberry said.

LIGHTHOUSE SIGNS AGREEMENT FOR SOMERSET GC

ATLANTA — Lighthouse Golf Group has signed an agreement with Somerset Education Foundation to provide complete management solutions for Somerset Golf Club in Locust Grove, Va. The course, originally built in 1996, is in the midst of a renovation of its greens, tees, bunkers and several complete holes. Architect Rick Robbins of Robbins & Associates Inc. of Cary, N.C., is overseeing the renovation being completed by Links Construction of Palm City, Fla.

OB Sports rebounds from mistaken identity

By DEREK RICE

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — In the last two years, OB Sports Golf Management has experienced incredible growth in the number of properties it manages, jumping from five contracts at the beginning of 2001 to 14 at press time. According to C.A. Roberts, OB Sports' vice president of business development, this growth is the best of any in the company's more than 30 years in business.

"We've achieved our most success ever that I could point to in the history of the company just in the last year and a half, which is weird," Roberts said.

While that would be cause for celebration at any company, it is particularly sweet for OB Sports, which has had to deal with a case of mistaken identity in recent years.

In the mid-1990s, OB Sports managed two courses in the Las Vegas area, Angel Park and The Legacy. The owners of those two courses approached OB Sports founder and CEO Orrin Vincent

and proposed forming a new company to build and buy more golf courses. The result was OB Sports LLC, which existed from 1995 to 2000. During that time, the company bought several golf courses

and built others, all the while picking up management contracts along the way, Roberts said.

"We had a nice portfolio of 16 golf courses," he said.

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OB Sports recently opened The Duke at Rancho El Dorado, one of 14 courses the company manages.

Elcot draws on team's diverse background

By DEREK RICE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Norm Carl, who raised the equity to develop Legends Club of Tennessee for Tom Kite and Bob Cupp's Legend Golf Development Co., has teamed with partners Rick Chukas and Joe Kennedy to form Elcot Golf Inc., a full-service golf management and consulting company.

The three principals come from diverse backgrounds. After raising financing for Legends Club, Carl continued to provide management and consulting services for the club. Chukas is a former partner with Arthur Andersen LLP, where he created a practice specialty area dedicated to the golf industry. Kennedy has more than 25 years of turfcare management experience and has been director of golf at Legends Club since it opened in 1990.

The company also hired Steve Nieman as director of corporate sales. Nieman previously worked for Raycom Sports as tournament director of the LPGA's Aerus Electrolux USA Championship hosted

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Editorial Focus: Golf Cars

Manufacturers tweak current golf car offerings

By DEREK RICE

The 'big three' golf car manufacturers have planned few changes to their main lines for 2003, but that does not mean they are resting on their laurels. Club Car and Yamaha Golf Car (YGC) and E-Z-GO Textron are all bringing new features, services or offerings, designed to make life easier for their customers, to the table.

REFURBISHED CARS

Earlier this year, Club Car, based in Augusta, Ga., made a foray into the used golf car market with its REserve program. Club Car now offers customers previously owned and refurbished golf cars backed by the Club Car brand.

Under the program, Club Car

will take back golf cars coming off lease and send them through



Yamaha has introduced its Genius diagnostic system, which allows courses to configure their golf cars with a Palm Pilot.

a refurbishing process, then sell or lease them to customers at a substantially lower price than a new fleet of cars, said Brian

Crawford, vice president of sales, aftermarket.

"There is a significant amount of demand in the market today for a lower-priced golf car that still offers the assurance of the Club Car brand," Crawford said. "This program helps us address that market with a consistently high-quality product offering that gives our customers great value."

For the most part, the vehicles that go through the program this year will be electric. They will be sent to either Club Car's main plant in Augusta or to its custom manufacturing facility in Indio, Calif., to go through the refurbishment process. Club

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Nelson relishes GM position at Half Moon Bay

By DOUG SAUNDERS

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — The role that women play in the game of golf stepped to the forefront last month with Annika Sorenstam's appearance at Colonial Country Club in Texas as she competed with the men in a regular PGA Tour event. Her appearance helped to remind the general public that this game, which has certainly been male-dominated for decades, is one that should be shared by all who want to become involved.

But the revolution of women playing a role in shaping the future of golf has been happening quietly over the last 15 years and it is definitely a growing trend. It was just seven years ago that Judy Bell served as president of the USGA, the first woman to serve in that capacity, and women make up a large seg-



Lyn Nelson

ment of new golfers coming into the game. The trend continues into the front offices of clubs and courses around the country as more women are ascending into managerial positions.

Lyn Nelson, general manager at Half Moon Bay Golf Links, just south of San Francisco, is part of this trend, but certainly is not new to the rigors of the job. Nelson has been working in the management end of the golf industry

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'Big three' introduce new technologies, services for 2003

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Car's refurbishment teams will put the cars through a mechanical inspection of the chassis, suspension, steering, electrical and brake systems to ensure the cars are performing to original factory specifications. They will then replace the body (front and rear), bumpers, scuff guards, bag well protector and access panel.

In addition to this thorough inspection, seats, tires, canopy top, batteries and battery chargers will be tested to make sure they are in good condition and are not damaged or defective.

All cars purchased through the REserve program will be covered by a limited warranty.

In the past, distributors and have sold golf cars coming off lease to secondary courses or individuals. The REserve program was developed to address the slow economy and the need for lower-cost vehicles, Crawford said.

"This is an opportunity for Club Car to provide a solution

to our customers that offers a lower price alternative to new product while maintaining the quality image the industry has come to expect from us," he said.

Club Car has also expanded its relationship with GPS provider UpLink this year. In January, the two announced their first collaborative offering, IQLink (GCN, March 2003), which integrates Club Car's IQ system with UpLink's wireless communication system. The offering allows courses to have full control over golf cars, including setting maximum speeds in certain areas and keeping golf cars out of other areas altogether.

DIAGNOSTICS MADE EASIER

YGC of Newnan, Ga., is sticking with its GMAX line of golf cars this year, but is adding a Palm-based diagnostic system called Genius, according to Chris Wall, national marketing manager for YGC. The company plans to announce the feature at its June 7 distributor meeting.

Using any Palm-based personal digital assistant (PDA), a mechanic, manager or superintendent can change settings on the golf car, including maximum speed and downhill braking power. More importantly, users can download information on number of rounds used and battery life at the touch of a button. Best of all, Wall said, the tools used for these functions are relatively inexpensive and are not proprietary to YGC.

"With this, you can buy a Palm Pilot for \$80 and we supply the software," Wall said.

The Genius system will be sold as an option to YGC customers who wish to use it. Wall said it will save courses both money and time.

"If they've got their own mechanic and they want to diagnose the whole fleet to see how many rounds the whole fleet has gone, he can diagnose the whole fleet very quickly," Wall said. "You're talking about 30 seconds to a minute per car to download the information off the car. Without something like

this, you have to go back to your written records and physically check the charge on the batteries."

Wall promised a major announcement about YGC's golf car line in the near future, but declined to be more specific.

"You'll probably see something new from us on the golf car side within a year but we won't be announcing it at this meeting," he said. "But our guys are feverishly working on something right now."

EXPANDING PERSONAL CAR LINE

E-Z-GO, also based in Augusta, is expanding its offerings in the realm of personal cars, which were introduced at the GCSAA Conference and Show in February. With a current lineup of the 2003 Freedom, Freedom SE and Freedom LE, E-Z-GO has tripled its individual car offerings.

The Freedom is the entry-level model. It includes a four-cup drink holder, center storage basket, low oil and fuel gauges or a state-of-charge meter. It is available in electric or gas configurations as well as the computer-controlled per-

formance configuration Precision Drive System. This model starts at \$5,995.

The Freedom SE is intended for country club members or private neighborhood residents. In addition to the Freedom features, it offers headlights, tail lights and a horn, with a suggested starting price of \$6,255.

The top of the Freedom line is the LE model, which is geared toward customization. It adds a number of paint color options, a wood grain dashboard, aluminum mag wheel tires, turn signals, a top and windshield to the features of the SE model. It starts at \$7,625.

Kim Hegel, marketing manager for the Freedom line, said the customization features of the LE were provided in response to customers' desires to "individualize" their cars.

"Individual golf car buyers are just that - individual," said Kim Hegel, marketing manager for the Freedom product line. "We listened to their varying customization, product feature and price point requests and responded with three golf car models." ■

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